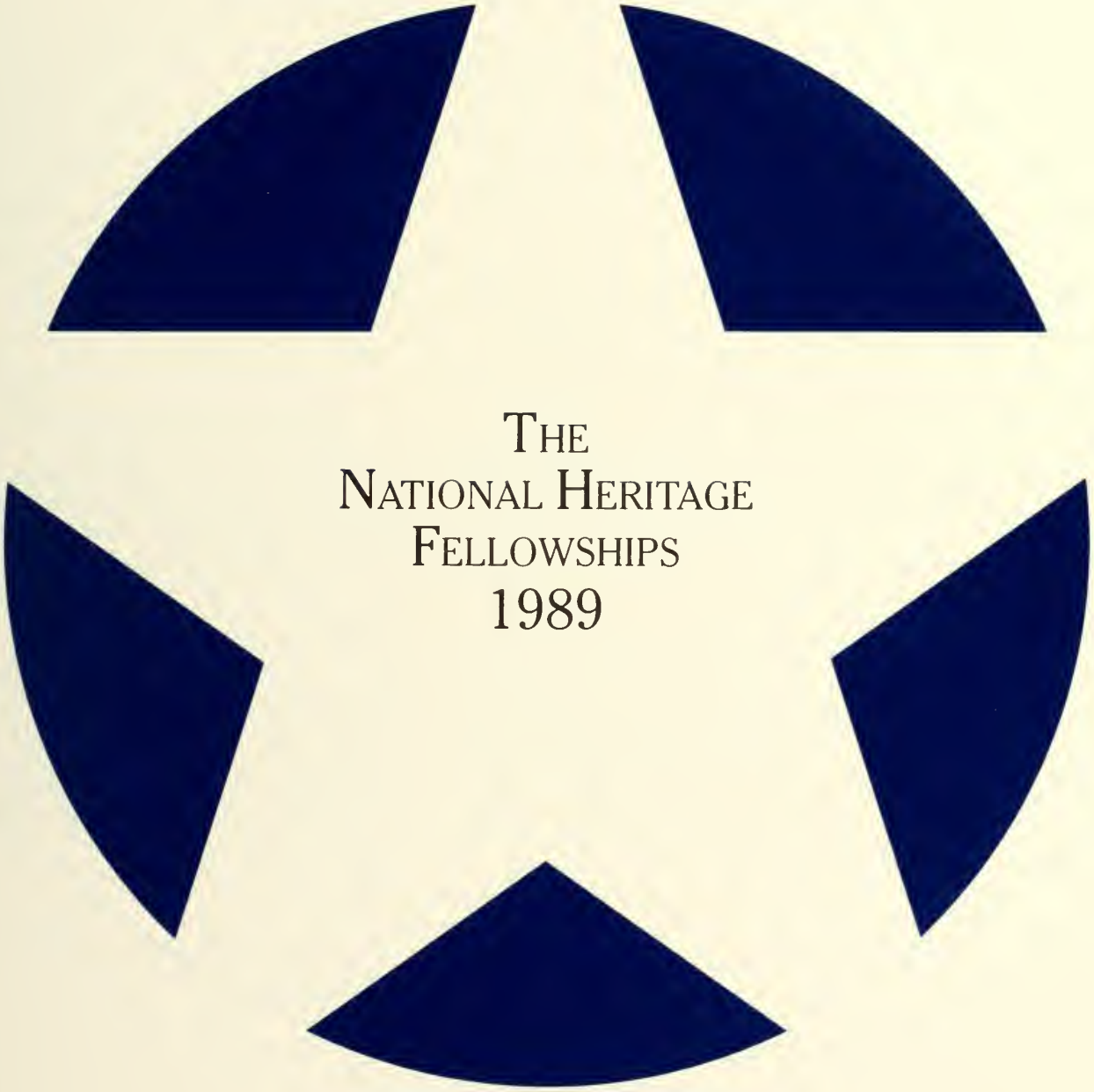
The National Heritage Fellowships 1989



The National Heritage Fellowships 1989

The National Endowment for the Arts
Folk Arts Program

The National Heritage Fellowships 1989

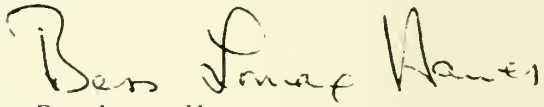
The Folk Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts began the National Heritage Fellowship awards in 1982. Since then, 111 artists from 43 states and territories have received this unusual honor, each having been nominated by their fellow citizens and adjudged appropriate by a panel of their peers. The Fellowship awards and their accompanying ceremonies, however, are designed to do more than honor exceptional individuals. Almost more importantly, they seek to bring to public attention the range, the liveliness, and the continuing integrity of traditional artistic styles and practices throughout the United States, whether tribal, local, ethnic, occupational, religious, or regional in origin. Through the Heritage program we can present each year a few exemplary, gifted, and honorable representatives of that lengthy human chain that has kept these specialized art forms vital and expressive across the centuries and the oceans of the world.

The panel that each year selects the National Heritage Fellows thus bears a heavy responsibility. Panelists look for authenticity, for uncommon skills and for uncommon excellence. They look, too, for the generosity of effort and spirit that marks the exceptional individual, for those who have made special contributions to a particular art form whether as leader, keeper, innovator, or teacher. Each honoree must have established an on-going record of artistic accomplishment; each must be worthy of national recognition and applause.

Working from a large number of important and well thought out nominations—188 at present count— the Folk Arts advisory panel struggles diligently each year to winnow out the necessary few for these significant awards. While their decisions are difficult, the overall picture gives us good cause to be cheerful about the future. We see no end to the available roster of talent and artistic excitement, and we continue to seek new nominations of individuals as yet unknown to us. Nominations once made are permanent; they may be brought up to date at any time and are made available to annual panel review. Each year's recommendations by the Folk Arts advisory panel are reviewed by the National Council on the Arts as well as the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. For further information about nominating a folk artist or artisan for future fellowships, write:

National Heritage Fellowships
Folk Arts Program
National Endowment for the Arts
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20506

The annual concert at which the year's awardees are presented, as well as the various related activities, have been planned with the assistance of the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA), a private non-profit corporation founded in 1933 and dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. The National Endowment for the Arts would like to thank the N.C.T.A., the Joseph Martinson Memorial Fund, the Philip F. Schoch Bequest, and WETA-FM for their assistance in the presentation of these fellowships. The Folk Arts Program wishes to express gratitude to each and everyone involved.



Bess Lomax Hawes
Director
Folk Arts Program

Credits

Lisner Concert

Director
Murray Horwitz

Production Manager
Tim Toothman

Scenic Designer Consultant
Russell Metheny

Lighting Designer
Daniel MacLean Wagner

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Master of Ceremonies
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Week's Events

Logistics and Planning Coordinators
Meg Glaser and Richard Kennedy

Program Supervisors
Barry Bergey, Meg Glaser, Bess Lomax Hawes, Dan Sheehy, Joseph T. Wilson

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1989 National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

John Cephas

John Cephas was born in 1930 in the Foggy Bottom area of Washington, D.C. Even as a child he knew he loved country living the best and he spent much time at his grandpa's place in the rural town of Bowling Green, Virginia, where he eventually made his home, acquiring in the process the nickname "Bowling Green." His musical education, however, began in Washington, D.C. His father owned a guitar which his young son began to play on the sly. He was taken to church regularly by his parents where he learned an African-American religious repertoire and the direct, forceful, convinced singing style that characterizes his music today.

His aunt Lillian gave him pointers on the instrument and his cousin, David Talliaferro, one of the best guitar players in Caroline County, Virginia, helped him polish his playing and taught him the Piedmont finger-picking style which John now describes as "alternating thumb and finger-picking where I keep a constant bass line going with my thumb. I pick out the melody or the words I'm singing with my fingers on the treble strings at the same time. It's almost like the guitar is talking, mimicking your feelings or the words to the songs and that steady accompanying bass gives it a jumping rhythm, a loping sound..."

John Cephas, like so many other musicians, benefited greatly from the availability of 78 rpm recordings of the classic blues musicians of the generation before him— Blind Boy Fuller, Reverend Gary Davis, Blind Lemon Jefferson. As he matured he began to be invited to play at local house parties and dances in Caroline County, Virginia. Performing with friends at parties became a lifelong habit and it was at a birthday party in the 1970s that he was heard by the late Big Chief Ellis, a prominent barrelhouse piano player who invited him to play with him professionally. Later, Ellis added an electric bass guitarist to his ensemble as well as a young African-American harmonica player, Phil Wiggins. John Cephas and Phil Wiggins continued playing together after the death of Big Chief Ellis and they have toured Europe, Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and the Soviet Union. In 1986 they won the W.C. Handy Award for the Best Traditional Album of the Year and were also named the Blues Entertainers of the Year. In 1988 Cephas won a Washington, D.C. Mayor's Arts Award.

Until recently, John Cephas— a community-based scholar and statesman of the blues— had to support himself by the trade of carpentry. When asked now what he wishes for the future, he says it is for still more time to devote to his art. He teaches, when invited, in formal classes, but he teaches informally almost all the time, eagerly passing along his skills and repertoire he has learned throughout his life. His nominating letter says, "More than anything else, John Cephas is a good man who cares about the blues and traditional music in general. Abroad, he serves as a goodwill ambassador for American music, but (at home) in workshops, he is always learning as well as teaching. As he puts it, he never stops learning ...Wherever he performs...he makes Black audiences proud of the musical heritage he shares with them."

Fairfield Four

Ordinarily National Heritage Fellowships are awarded to individual artists. There are certain art forms, however, that absolutely require the participation of more than one person, notably certain vocal and instrumental musical styles. When such a performing ensemble has been in existence over many years, establishing both a reputation of genuine significance within the art form and an identifiable musical personality and style, it seems appropriate to recognize the ensemble itself.

This is the case with the Fairfield Four, a venerable institution in the world of the Black gospel quartet *a cappella* singing tradition and a significant institution in the musical history of Nashville, Tennessee. The Fairfield Four first organized as a trio of young men in the Sunday school of the Fairfield Baptist Church on Hermitage Avenue in Nashville during the early 1920s. They were later joined by the young Samuel McCrary, the only member of the original group still active as a singer; he was a prodigy, undoubtedly

Top:
John Cephas
Photo by Dexter Hodges

Bottom:
Fairfield Four
Photo by Robert Cogswell

the most outstanding gospel quartet lead singer Nashville has ever produced.

In 1942 the group won an award in a local promotional contest, the prize being an appearance on a local radio station with a hookup to CBS. Their subsequent broadcast was so well received across the nation that the quartet remained a fixture on the station for almost ten years. Other nationally known African-American ensembles were broadcasting at the time, the Golden Gate Quartet and the Wings over Jordan choir, among others, but the Fairfield Four sang in what researcher Douglas Seroff refers to as "the pressing emotional *gospel* style" that became exceptionally popular in both the midwestern and southern states. They developed at that time, too, another of their trademarks— an unusually broad repertoire including the "jubilees" made popular by the Golden Gates, traditional folk spirituals as sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and their own gospel numbers as well. It was probably the versatility of their repertoire that enabled them to remain popular on national radio for so many years.

Sam McCrary received a call to the ministry and his departure to become pastor at St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, restricted his participation in the quartet's tours and concerts, and over the years the group fell into silence.

A special "Quartet Reunion" concert held in Birmingham, Alabama in 1980 seemed an appropriate time to attempt to revive this remarkable tradition, and four of the surviving singers, including Sam McCrary, took part. Since that glorious occasion, they have not looked back. They have performed in Washington, D.C. at the Smithsonian's "Black American Quartet Traditions" presentation, in New York's Carnegie Hall, and in the New Orleans' Jazz and Heritage Festival. They have been honored in their own city by a major concert of quartet singing at Nashville's 1988 Gospel Arts Day. They are a national musical treasure of which all Americans can be proud.

José Gutiérrez

José Gutiérrez was born in 1942 on a ranch known as "La Costa de la Palma" (The Palm Tree Coast) on the Alvarado Lagoon in

José Gutiérrez

Veracruz, a few miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. This is the region of the *jarochos*, the local name for the people who live on the southeastern coastal plain of Mexico.

He grew up surrounded by music. Both his grandfathers were experienced instrumentalists and singers, as were his father and several of his uncles. He became interested in the guitar at the age of seven, and at eight he was at last given his own *mosquito*, the smallest of the rhythm guitars known as *jaranas*, in the characteristic jarocho ensemble. He can remember staying up till all hours of the night listening to the men of his family making their music, until at last he would fall asleep on the floor at his uncle's feet still clutching his beautiful little guitar.

At the age of 15, José took up the *requinto*, the small four-string melody guitar that plays off against the jarocho harp in explosions of rapid-fire syncopations. He recalls hearing of a jarocho group that needed a player and, upon applying, being laughed at for his youth. He tried out nonetheless, starting out with one of the fastest selections of the jarocho repertoire. In those days, he had lots of *pulso* (strength) in his arms and soon outdistanced the other musicians; "I left them waiting," he says now. That particular incident marked the beginning of his professional career in Veracruz.

In the early 1960s, Lino Chavez invited José Gutiérrez to Mexico City to perform and record with what was considered to be, and still is, the best jarocho ensemble in Mexico. Gutiérrez not only played jarana for Chavez, he was also the lead singer, or *pregonero*, for the group. He also had begun to play the harp as well as the other two instruments making up the essential sound of jarocho music, becoming one of the best all-around jarocho musicians in the world.

The late 1960s saw the beginning of José Gutiérrez' remarkable touring career. He visited and played in almost every European country, spending well over a year in Germany alone; he also toured Asia, the Philippines, Australia, all of South and Central America, and Canada. He settled in the United States in the early 1970s, continuing his remarkable musical career. He was an artist-in-residence at the University of Washington in Seattle for a year, a master artist/instructor at the Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego, and a master artist for numerous individual apprenticeships funded through state and federal sources. Having resettled in California he has performed both at the National Folk Festival and at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife, at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, and for the World Music Institute in New York City. His impeccable technique, the depth and solidity of his musical sensibility, and his wide-ranging comprehension of the complexities of the jarocho tradition make him one of the truly remarkable musicians of our nation.

Richard Avedis Hagopian

Richard Hagopian was born in 1937 of Armenian parents in the small town in the fertile central valley of California where he still lives. He demonstrated his musical interest and immense talents early, beginning to study the violin at the age of nine and the clarinet at the age of ten. At the age of eleven, he took up the *oud*, the instrument upon which he was to become a virtuoso.

The oud is a short-necked plucked stringed instrument of the family known by musical

Richard Hagopian

classification experts as "the lute." Actually the oud is so central to the lute family as to be credited with responsibility of the name itself; "al-'ud" is the Arabic word that is translated as "the lute." The oud has been called the queen of Near Eastern musical instruments. It is the principal instrument of the Arab world and of major importance in Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

The young Richard Hagopian was called to become the oudist and selected as the only student of the internationally known Armenian artist Kanuni Garbis Bakirgian- a very great honor. He learned also the clarinet and the *dumbeg* and the *kanoun*, essential elements in the Near Eastern orchestra, and he mastered the accompanying musical theory, notation techniques, and both the classical and folk repertoires. He was determined to learn the entire tradition. He asked question after question of old men and women he met at rural picnics and dances about how it had been at home in Armenia, how they had celebrated, how they worshipped, how their instruments were made, what dance steps were associated with the tunes of various geographical regions, how they had changed over time, what new elements had been added in this new land of the United States. He built up an extraordinary collection of phonograph recordings from the old country, but always he went to the older singers and dancers, watching and listening and trying it out himself.

In addition he is widely acclaimed as a master artist, a brilliant technician. He was given the title "Oudi" in 1969 by the internationally famous virtuoso, Oudi Hrant, a blind master; this is the highest honor an oudist can receive. A local professor of Armenian history and art calls him the "best and most authentic oud player in the United States. No one else has done what Hagopian has accomplished to preserve a folk music tradition that traces its melodic and rhythmic sources to...liturgical music of the fourth and fifth centuries..." Today Richard supports his family with the delicatessen he opened long ago; sometimes he plays, sometimes he records. He has issued seven albums of Armenian music. Everywhere he plays his oud, the sounds of Armenia are heard again.

Christy Hengel

The town of New Ulm lies just south of the Minnesota River in the south-central agricultural region of the state that was settled well before the end of the 19th century by immigrating German farmers. New Ulm has long been a center of German-American life in the region, and central to German-American musical tradition is the shop called "Hengel's Concertinas" where, as the Hengel handbill states firmly, "the finest concertinas available" are for sale and repair, "favorites of leading concertina artists and old-time dance orchestras."

Christy Hengel was born on a farm in Wanda, Minnesota (43 miles west of New Ulm), in 1922; he moved during his young adulthood to Sleepy Eye and Waseca before settling down in New Ulm in 1965. At no time in his life has he lived more than 55 miles away from his present home. His fascination with the concertina began at the age of 12, when he heard Whoopee John, a local band leader and concertina player who was widely known as a popular musician in the Dutchman polka or "New Ulm" style. The concer-

Top:
Christy Hengel
Photo by Joey McLiester courtesy of Star-Tribune

Bottom:
Ilias Kementzides
Photo by Martin Koenig

tina and the tuba are crucial to the sound of Dutchman-style bands. Such bands also play in more relaxed, less vigorous, and smoother tempos than do Polish or Slovenian polka orchestras. By the time he was 17, the young Christy had saved up his earnings and bought his first concertina.

Like many farm-raised young men, Christy Hengel was a tinkerer; he once built a motorcycle from scratch and rode it for 5,000 miles or so. He began spending his summers in farm work and his winters tearing down, rebuilding, and repairing concertinas. In the process he developed some strong ideas about proper construction and tonal qualities and, when the world-renowned Patek concertina factory was available for sale after the death of its owner in 1955, he was ready. He pooled his funds and took his big chance, purchasing all the equipment and spare parts and set up his own business. His first concertina was made in 1955; since then he has made major improvements in the instrument, including easier lever action, lighter overall weight, and the impeccable tuning for which the Hengel concertinas were to become famous.

Christy Hengel has not spent his life simply repairing and building concertinas; he played them also, establishing his own polka band in 1947 and joining the Six Fat Dutchmen Band, and later the Jolly Brewers, both of which toured extensively throughout the Midwest. But it is for the development of the Hengel concertina that he will be remembered in the history of polka music. Today he works steadily in his shop, sending out some parts of the complex instruments for manufacture, but each and every instrument still is put together by hand— falling further behind every year with his orders, but reluctant to eliminate what the field calls "the Christy Hengel touch," the hand-tuning and filing of the precision reed systems that produce the characteristic sound he has made famous.

Ilias Kementzides

Ilias Kementzides is a master *lyra* player in the unique Pontic Greek musical tradition. He was born in the Caucasus in 1926 and grew up in a musical family; his uncle, a professional

musician, encouraged the young boy in his practicing. In August of 1940 the family, beset by economic difficulties, moved to Greece, arriving only shortly before the outbreak of World War II and occupation of Greece by the Germans. During this difficult period, Pontians were often treated as foreigners even by the Greeks, forcing the Pontian community to hold even more closely together, making their special cultural traditions even more precious and important. Kementzides recalls, "In Russia, every weekend the whole neighborhood would gather in the courtyard. There was nothing else to do, no theater, no movies, only music. If someone heard an instrument starting up, everyone would come running. It was joyous. That's how it was in Greece too. Not a blade of grass could grow in our courtyard, there was so much dancing."

Kementzides became a professional musician, playing at social clubs and theaters. He also farmed a small plot of land, but eventually realized that he could not make enough money in Greece to leave his young family any more than a recollection of his music. He was determined to emigrate to the United States, and in 1974 he and his wife and three children settled in the Pontic community of Norwalk, Connecticut, where he found employment in an electronics factory.

Typically, the lyra (a bottle-shaped violin with three strings) heads a three-piece orchestra ensemble, but Kementzides has preserved as well the strong solo lyra tradition he learned as a child. When he arrived in Connecticut, he began playing almost at once for local Pontic social occasions. Word quickly spread throughout the Greek community that a powerful new musician had arrived who was a first-class dance musician as well as a strong singer with an extensive repertoire of songs in the Pontic dialect. (He also sings in Greek, Turkish and Russian, all of which he speaks fluently.)

The many letters supporting Ilias Kementzides' nomination for a National Heritage Fellowship Award all speak of the dignity and gracefulness of his demeanor. One letter mentions "his persistence for perfection in his art," another "his strong and honorable character," another his "generosity of spirit." These qualities were all notable in his first appearance before a general audience in the U.S. when he played at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife. He comments later, "The people applauded me— I saw that there was a place for the lyra here. Not only that, I was able to give a gift, in a sense, to pass on an ancient tradition..."

Ethel Kvalheim
Photo by Lewis Koch, Courtesy of Wisconsin Folk Museum

Ethel Kvalheim

The art of *rosemaling*—or rose painting—came to the United States in the form of immigrant family heirlooms and decorated keepsakes brought here by 19th-century immigrant families from Norway where the art had originated. This distinctive decorative style became a proud symbol of Norwegian ethnicity; but the practice of the art itself came close to dying out in the United States as the new immigrants turned to more pressing survival tasks.

During the Depression years of the 1930s an unemployed wagon-stripper in southern Wisconsin named Per Lysne turned to rosemaling as a desperately needed source of cash income. Rosemaling had been a tradition in his family, and he had utilized some of its techniques in the gilt decorations and signs he had painted on the no-longer marketable horse-drawn wagons of his youth. Utilizing designs he remembered from his father's work and adapting them to wooden objects, he eventually developed a rosemaled wooden

Vanessa Morgan
Photo by Manley Settle

"smorgasbord plate" designed for mail order sale which became widely popular.

Among the many Norwegian-Americans who came to watch him paint in his small studio in Stoughton, Wisconsin was a young neighbor, Ethel Kvalheim. She became the key link in the American revival of rosemaling. She learned her craft, like most folk artisans, by direct observation; but she not only watched Per Lysne, she took care to observe and learn from the many examples of old-world rosemaling she saw about her in neighbors' homes. Today she is acknowledged as the premier senior rosemaler of the United States.

National shows in the art of rosemaling are evaluated by a trio of judges: a senior Norwegian rosemaler, a senior American rosemaler, and a senior artist from another field. This is due to the varied aesthetic traditions that have grown up in this lively art— the American rosemaling style utilizes solid blocks of color often outlined in black, cross-hatching, pastel colors, and central floral designs. Norwegian rosemaling, on the other hand, includes a number of distinctive regional styles which generally feature traditional dark colors, careful shading brushwork, effects, and a frequent use of abstract stylized designs. Mrs. Kvalheim can work in any of the styles, but says that each artist, including herself, interprets the designs individually. Although she was commissioned in 1976 to rosemal the entire interior of the Stoughton Home Savings and Loan Bank—an extraordinary use of traditional design in a community setting—she nowadays prefers to paint for her own enjoyment rather than by commission.

The King of Norway granted Ethel Kvalheim the Medal of St. Olaf in recognition of her artistry. The Norwegian-American community has long given her their support and loyalty for her life-long dedication to their national decorative art.

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan was born in 1952 in the Gila River Indian community near Tempe, Arizona, daughter of Clifford Santos of the Gila River Pima Tribe and LaQuinta Mopope, a Kiowa. She spent most of her childhood with her grandparents, and began learning Kiowa artistic techniques from her grandmother, Jeanette Berry Mopope, at the age of eleven. The most important lesson the older woman taught her, however, was as her granddaughter now reports: "Watch me...pay attention...know why you are doing things a certain way...I won't be here forever!" She learned all she could from her grandmother and other tribal elders, read historical reports, and examined archive photographs, museum pieces, and any other cultural materials available.

She attended high school and college in Oklahoma; by 1975 she was working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in that state. She now lives with her family in a home on a hill in the Red Stone area between Fort Cobb and Anadarko, deep in the Kiowa territory; the site is located on the allotment land of her grandmother. Perhaps this is partly why she and her husband have built an earth lodge on their property which she uses as a studio and makes available to tribal members for cultural activities. She feels it provides an environment that is especially pleasant to tribal elders and conducive to discussions of

Mabel Murphy
Photo by Jerry Baumeister

cultural and historical matters.

Vanessa Morgan has participated in a bewildering number of special exhibitions and has been commissioned by the Kiowa tribal authorities to make ceremonial regalia for important ritual occasions, a signal honor in itself since only individuals of great artistic skills and impeccable reputations receive such invitations. In a brief statement about her work, she once said, "I am a Kiowa woman. My work is traditional Kiowa work...It frightens me that our Kiowa heritage that was so powerful and beautiful has almost disappeared. It is more important that I continue my traditional work than to take artistic liberties at this time."

The Director of the American Indian Program at the Smithsonian says of her, "Paukeigope is a traditional person whose contributions to her own community come before her career as a successful artist. Such individuals are rare in the late 20th century where the economics of the art market push gifted artists in the direction of consummate self-interest at the expense of group identity and community goals...She is a fully involved member of her community..., a willing teacher to serious students..., and a superb artist gifted with creative vision and professional integrity."

Mabel E. Murphy

Mabel Murphy was born in 1907 in the agricultural heartland of the state of Missouri. She began school at the age of six in a one-room schoolhouse that served the children of Callaway County's families from the first through eighth grades.

At the age of eight, Mabel pieced her first quilt top— a Four Patch pattern, the standard design taught a child as her first piece of needlework in those days. Mabel set the blocks, each four squares of freely selected variegated material, into a checkerboard pattern, stitching them together nine stitches to the inch, or as close as her inexperienced needle could come to that high standard. When all the blocks of four had been joined into a single large square, Mabel's mother and a neighbor helped her to quilt the completed top.

Since those days, Mabel Murphy has not only fulfilled the many duties of a homemaker, a mother, and a public-spirited citizen of her community, she has also made more than a hundred quilts, all in the same way, the way of all traditional quiltmakers. The individual needleworker conceives the project, selects the design and material, pieces together the quilt top. When that part of the work is finished, she calls together neighbor women to help with the lengthy job of quilting. Each finished quilt can be looked at as a sort of aesthetic allegory, mapping out over and over again the relationship between the individual artist and the supporting community.

Mabel Murphy has taught hundreds of women to quilt and has opened her home every Thursday and Friday morning to quilting circles for as long as anyone can remember. She has never received nor asked for a penny for her services, her advice, her experienced eye, nor has she ever sold a quilt. Her quilts go to her children and her grandchildren; each receiving a quilt upon their graduation from high school and again from college. (When the boys in the family become 21, they receive a Bow Tie quilt to signify their new manhood). And each also receives two matching quilts upon his or her wedding day.

LaVaughn Robinson
Photo by Patented Photos

Her Thursday morning quilting group has made several quilts for donation to community causes—fund-raising auctions for the local hospital or community college.

Some years ago, Mrs. Murphy's neighbors undertook to put up an exhibit of her quilts so that the whole community could get a sense of the magnitude of her contribution. Mounted in the local college's fine arts gallery, the exhibit, titled "A Lifetime of Love," featured 41 of her quilts in a dazzling display, and drew almost 500 people from 14 states in the first few weeks. She explained her impressive display simply, "I just don't like to sit and hold my hands."

LaVaughn Robinson

LaVaughn Robinson was born 62 years ago in South Philadelphia, home of such great tap masters as Honi Coles and the Nicholas Brothers, and one of the major urban centers where various vernacular street dance forms had coalesced into the mature art form of tap. His dancing career began at the age of 7 on a linoleum floor in the shed kitchen of his family's row home when his mother hiked up her skirts to teach him his first time step. Soon he graduated to dancing for change on downtown and South Philadelphia street corners. When nearly grown, he began "busking" (impromptu appearances) in neighborhood bars and nightclubs until he enlisted in the army in 1945.

Army life found him performing from time to time in military facilities around the country, honing his dancing skills and picking up experience. In 1947 after his discharge from the service, he entered professional life, over the years appearing with Cab Calloway, Tommy Dorsey, Maynard Ferguson, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker. By 1972 when he went into temporary retirement, stage and nightclub life had become nearly extinct as discotheques took over not only the stage but club life as well, and the electronic instruments drowned out the softer, subtler percussive sounds of the tap dancer.

Throughout the years, LaVaughn Robinson has maintained his base in the city of Philadelphia where he kept both home and community ties strong. In 1980 he entered upon what was to become almost a second career: he was invited by Philadelphia's College of the Performing Arts to help build its tap dance program.

The art of tap dance can be considered solely as art for the stage, a professional activity to be judged by theatrical standards. LaVaughn has certainly participated successfully in that part of the tap world. Unlike many of his peers, however, he has maintained a solid appreciation of the street sounds from which tap emerged. It is typical of LaVaughn that he himself discovered the previous National Heritage Awardee, street poet and rhythmic artist, Horace "Spoons" Williams and brought him to the attention of the International House of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Folk Festival and Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife audiences. Folklorist Glenn Hinson writes: "Whenever

LaVaughn performs, he takes pains to present tap as an art form grounded in community tradition and honed by generations of tap masters. His words convey a sense of heritage; his dancing fosters an appreciation of artistic depth, and his manner conveys the dignity of artistic accomplishment. Whether at a folk festival or shopping mall, at community celebration or public school, LaVaughn mixes tap with teaching, leaving behind a newly cultivated sense of esteem and understanding..."

Earl Scruggs

New York Times critic Robert Shelton has compared him to Paganini. Al Rudis of the *Chicago Sun Times* said, "What Segovia is to the guitar, Earl Scruggs is to the five-string banjo." The musician they celebrate was born in 1924 near Shelby, North Carolina, in the Flint Hill community. His father, a banjo player, died when Earl was four; Earl's brothers and sisters played banjo and guitar and his mother encouraged his musical interests. By the age of four he had begun teaching himself banjo, sparked by a relative named Smith Hammett who played a form of North Carolina three-fingered picking. The child prodigy watched and listened carefully. By the age of five he could play tunes: by the age of ten he had invented the basic syncopation which, superimposed on the older three-fingered North Carolina technique, was to become known as "Scruggs-style banjo." Musicians throughout the world continue to imitate this distinctive banjo style that has come to define bluegrass music.

By his early teens Earl Scruggs was playing for local dances, social affairs and on local radio stations. Like so many young men in his area, he found steady employment in a local textile mill. The professional music business seemed far too risky and unstable at the time. He remembers now that looking into the music world was "like looking into a dark room." He played occasionally with local bands, most notably the Morris Brothers, while continuing to develop his own special instrumental style, until the end of World War II when his mother encouraged him to pursue music as a career.

Earl Scruggs
Photo by Norman Seeff

The remainder of the Earl Scruggs story is entwined with the transformation of the informal country picking and singing of the early part of the 20th century into the mass popular music that pours out of Nashville today. By the age of 21, he met Bill Monroe and before long joined his band, the Blue Grass Boys, which was to become the seminal ensemble in the development of a musical style that, in the late 1950s, was being referred to as bluegrass. In 1948 Earl and Lester Flatt formed a band of their own, beginning on a radio station in Bristol, Tennessee. Their theme song was a Carter Family tune, "Foggy Mountain Top" and from it the new band derived its name, the "Foggy Mountain Boys." By the late 1950s, a combination of recordings, radio shows, extensive touring, and a syndicated television show had made the name "Flatt & Scruggs" synonymous with bluegrass. They recorded the music sound track of "The Ballad of Jed Clampett," the theme for "The Beverly Hillbillies" TV show and they made frequent guest appearances on the show. Later, Earl's classic "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" was used as the theme of the film "Bonnie and Clyde." He received a BMI and a Grammy Award for the tune. But the greatest award came from his fellow banjoists. They all know and perform that tune, the banjoists in Moscow and Bangkok, as well as those near Flint Hill.

Harry V. Shourds
Photo by Michael Bergmen,
Courtesy of New Jersey State Council on the Arts

In 1969 Earl formed a new group, "The Earl Scruggs Revue," with his three sons Gary, Randy, and Steve and other musicians. They toured extensively and performed together until 1980 and Earl recalls it as a rewarding time.

Earl Scruggs is truly one of the most influential musicians of the folk music world. Certainly no one is imitated more than him, but in another sense perhaps his most critical characteristic is his impeccable musicianship and the electrifying precision of his fabled technique. He has always been at the forefront of musical change in this area, but his changes were invariably firmly entrenched in older musical styles and expressed through a solid musicality few musicians of any era can match.

Harry V. Shourds

Harry V. Shourds is a third generation decoy carver. His grandfather Harry Vinuckson Shourds (1871-1920), lived in Tuckerton, New Jersey, in the famous Barnegat Bay area and has been described as "perhaps the greatest professional decoy maker in New Jersey, at a time when Tuckerton could be said to be the handmade duck decoy capital of the United States, and therefore of the world." His son Harry M. and his grandson today (Harry V. II), followed in his footsteps, all three clearly related in style and aesthetic impulse, each one distinctive. The present-day Shourds says, "I hate to copy someone else, even if it's someone in my family...I make my own ducks. And I think each one (in my family) did. You can tell my grandfather's duck from my father's duck and you can tell my duck."

Decoy carvers often distinguish between birds carved for use by hunters— "working decoys"— and those carved for simple display—"decorative decoys." The former must be carved with an eye for balance and lifelike behavior. Birds carved in the Shourds' tradition feature naturalistic heads and simply painted hollow bodies for better flotation: working decoys will also have inletted flush lead weights so that the bird rides more realistically in the water. The head is carved separately from the body. Mr. Shourds says that his grandfather was known to be able to sit down in a barber's chair for a shave and whittle a duck's head beneath the drapery while the barber worked on him, emerging at the last with a jacknife in one hand, a completed duck head in the other, as well as a fresh shave.

Overall the carvers around the Barnegat Bay area try to make their carvings resemble two broad groupings: "diver" ducks such as mergansers and canvasbacks, and "marsh" ducks like mallards and pintails. But the degree of realism necessary for an effective working decoy is a question that leads to lengthy conversations. Harry Shourds says that the decoy must behave naturally in the water so that a duck flying over would say, "That's a nice flock of ducks down there. Think I'll go down and see what they are doing." He adds, "Today, the carvers are getting real ducks. They're getting mounted or frozen ducks and they copy them feather for feather. It's really model-making instead of carving. It's nice sculpture when it's finished. But I like to put a little dream into it..." His own decoys, he says "are what I think a duck looks like. I don't copy off a real duck and none of the oldtimers did. They hunted duck and sold ducks in the wild and took their memories with them. They worked from

Chesley Wilson
Photo by Helga Teiwes,
Courtesy of the
Arizona State Museum

those memories."

Today Harry Shourds' ducks adorn museums across the eastern states, including the prestigious permanent collection of Maryland's Ward Foundation Museum. But we can probably see his sculptures at their best, bobbing out on Barnegat Bay, combining both realism and the "little dream" that all creative artists must eventually rely upon.

Chesley Wilson

Chesley Goseyun Wilson is a Western Apache of the Eagle Clan. He was born in 1932 on the San Carlos Reservation in the White Mountain area of southeastern Arizona and today lives in the nearby city of Tucson. He is a medicine man, qualified to conduct important tribal ceremonies, a singer, a dancer, and the last active member of a family of Apache violin makers descended from Amos Gustina, an important musician of the Western Apache people.

The Apache have a long tradition of woodcarving in general, but are especially notable for their tradition of stringed instrument making, a musical tradition shared only, as far as is now known, with the Seri Indians of northwestern Mexico. The indigenous origin of the Apache violin is difficult to establish, though it seems quite likely the tradition existed prior to the Spanish invasion.

The present-day Apache violin is most typically made of the dried flower stalk of the *agave* or century plant, cut to lengths of about 40 cm. The soft interior pith is hollowed out leaving a few inches of stalk intact at both ends in order to support the string peg and the tuning peg. The instrument is strung with black horsehair as is the bow, which is made of any flexible wood that can be bent into shape. Only one string is used, and the violin is played by placing the lower end against the chest, stopping the strings with one or more fingers of the left hand and moving the bow with the right hand. As in most similar unfretted instruments, there is a frequent use of micro tones which are often not noticeable to the untrained ear. This is also a characteristic of Apache melodies.

Since the instrument is intended for solo performance, its tone is delicate and soft. Songs played on these violins, according to Mr. Wilson, include love songs, ceremonial songs, social dance songs, and improvisations for the players' own enjoyment. The violins may be ornamented with painting and light carving in geometric designs, often in black or red, and sometimes they include traditional symbols for the four directions, clouds, mountains, the sun, and other natural elements. In the Apache language, the violin is known as "wood that sings" or the "buzz-buzz sound," a reference to its soft, dry, intimate tone.

Chesley Wilson continues to practice his crafts and instruct younger Apache students in the discipline of Apache Gan dancing and singing. He speaks and demonstrates before wider audiences and has performed at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, the Southwest Museum in Santa Fe, and at the Tucson Meet Yourself Festival, among others. Wherever he goes, he tries to demonstrate the Apache qualities of independence and cultural commitment. "My fiddle only plays Apache songs," he says.

The National Heritage Fellowship Awardees 1982-1988

1982

Dewey Balfa
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Saddle Maker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Holliswood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks
Appalachian Musician/
Storyteller/Instrument
Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez
Texas-Mexican
Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotton*
Black Songster/Song
writer
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer
Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket
Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin
Lebanese-American Lace
Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard (Sandman) Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo
Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana
Eskimo Maskmaker/
Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil
Hispanic Storyteller/
Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
New York, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/
Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument
Maker
Morovis, PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Grass Creek, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/
Storyteller/Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/
Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

H. "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/
Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alphonse "Bois Sec"
Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin
Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/
Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American
Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate
Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American
Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/
Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket
Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/
Polka Master
Milwaukee, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American *Corona*
Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie"
Ford
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy
Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American
Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson
Afro-American Religious
Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key
Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/
Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/
Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume
Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
Afro-American Blues
Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida
Romero
Hispanic-American
Craftsworkers in Tin and
Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala
Mexican-American
accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American egg
painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore
New England quilter/
needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American step-
dancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American bobbin
lacemaker
Hankison, ND

John Dee Holeman
Afro-American dancer/
musician/singer
Durham, NC

Albert Luandrew (Sun-
nyland Slim)
Afro-American blues
pianist/singer
Chicago, IL

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith
Afro-American gospel
singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian cowboy singer/
ukulele player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian guitar
player/singer
Deep Gap, NC

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong weaver/
embroiderer
Detroit, MI

* (deceased)

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